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ABSTRACT

This paper is a summary of an awareness session on the nationally validated programs of the Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Center for Global and Multicultural Education. The REACH curricula are designed to be infused into the K-12 programs of U.S. schools. The learner outcomes of the curricula are positive self concepts, multicultural literacy, and respect for the cultural diversity of U.S. society. The four components of the REACH Center's programs are: (1) cultural self-awareness; (2) multicultural knowledge; (3) human relation and communication skills; and (4) cross-cultural experiences. Multicultural education is defined as multi-ethnic education that deals with human diversity within the United States. It incorporates the study of ethnic, racial, and cultural similarities and differences, as well as issues related to gender, age, socioeconomic status, and physical ability. Multicultural education does not aim at eradicating cultural differences, but is based on the social theory of acculturation, intercultural exchange that blends diverse people into a socially unified culture. Multicultural art education expands students knowledge of world views, stylistic and technical options, aesthetic systems, and the symbolic meanings that may be conveyed through art. It increases students repertoire of ways of thinking and behaving, and fosters social, creative, and mental growth. Cultural institutions need to work with ethnic authors and publishers of instructional materials to develop programs and publish both print and non print multicultural art educational resources. (DK)

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The REACH Center and Multicultural (Multi-ethnic) Art Education

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Abstract

This paper is a summary of an awareness session on the nationally validated programs of The REACH (Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage) Center for Global and Multicultural Education. The paper was presented at the 1991 National Art Education Association in Phoenix, AZ. The REACH curricula are designed to be infused into the K-12 programs of US schools. The Learner Outcomes of the curricula are positive self concepts, multicultural literacy and respect for the USA's cultural diversity. The four components of the **REACH Center's** programs are: **Cultural Self-Awareness, Multicultural Knowledge, Human Relation & Communication Skills, and Cross-cultural Experiences**. The presentation explained the concepts and principles, and illustrated how publishers, museum personnel, and colleges, universities and K-12 teachers may apply them to achieve education reform.

Background

Demographers predict that by the year 2000, two-thirds of the students in the United States' schools will be non-whites and by the year 2010 over 50 percent of the population in the United States will be people of color. In recognition of this, State Boards of Education have mandated that school districts modify their curricula and deliver a multicultural education to all students. At the present time, for example, a majority of the students in the Minneapolis Schools are people of color, while 86% of the teachers are European-Americans. Because of educational experiences, social patterns and the Europocentric bias of school curricula, school districts, post-secondary education and cultural institutions are ill prepared and ill equipped to deliver multicultural programs that meet the needs of the verging majority.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural Education (or more accurately, Multi-ethnic Education), deals with human diversity <u>within</u> the United States. It incorporates the study of ethnic, racial and cultural similarities and differences, as well as issues related to gender, age, socioeconomic status and physical ability.

Multicultural education is not based on the melting pot theory of assimilation that aimed at eradicating cultural differences; but, is based on the social theory of acculturation. Acculturation is a dynamic process of intercultural exchange that blends diverse people into a socially unified culture. It affirms the principle that each ethnic group possesses a genre of ideas that has enhanced and enriched the U.S. society. Multicultural Education is not a "special" program only for minorities; but a philosophy of education that aims to impart to all students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions that will enable them to take advantage of opportunities and function as responsible citizens in a pluralistic society. It strives to overcome ignorance, prejudice, and racism, by replacing historical omissions and cultural distortions with accurate information. It teaches students to recognize bias and stereotypes in mass media, and to understand and respect cultural diversity. Multicultural Education acts to assure that all students receive equitable benefits from the public educational system and that they develop positive self concepts, self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Global Education, is generally concerned with the earth as an interrelated holistic system and with the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world. Although Global Education includes **International Education** (the study of formal relationships between the governments of two or more nations), it primarily focuses on the interrelated global systems (economic, environmental, political, cultural, electronic communication, et al) that go beyond national boundaries and effect the entire planet. Global Education also deals with multicultural issues, but on the global level. It teaches students to understand and respect people and cultures of nations <u>outside</u> of the United States. Curricula transcend narrow western-centric biases to teach students to understand the dynamics of ethnocentrism, imperialism and oppression, and prepares them for citizenship in a global society.

In the absence of multicultural art educational curricular guidelines, art educators and program developers are merging Global and Multicultural Education with their own thoughts and are producing lessons, units, media resources, exhibitions and books that have little relevance to the social agenda of Multicultural Education. Developing students' awareness of the art of world cultures (e.g. West African mask, Japanese ink drawings, Mexican folk arts or Native-American architecture), will not improve ethnic and racial relationships in schools, or impart to students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions that they will need to create a society that ensures equality of opportunity for all its members.

Multicultural/Multi-ethnic Art Education

To deliver a multicultural education, schools will need to transform their curricula. An education that is multicultural provides students with **Cultural Self Awareness; Multicultural Knowledge; Human Relations and Communications Skills; and Cross-Cultural Experiences.** It provides opportunities for amicable social interaction between races and ethnic groups, and involves students in multi-ethnic projects and equity processes. Multicultural Education gives students insight into the dynamics of culture and mass media, and how they shape values, behavior and beliefs of individuals and groups. It draws its content from the humanities and examines topics such as ethnocentrism, bias, prejudice, racism, sexism and stereotypes. Through interdisciplinary instructional approaches, students become familiar with diverse sociocultural views of history, issues and events. And, they are taught how to examine phenomena and concepts from multiple cultural perspectives. **Multicultural Art Education** add to this list, artistic heritages, ethnic traditions, histories and philosophies of art, aesthetics theories and contextual interpretations of works of art by members of the USA's major ethnic groups. **Multicultural Art Education** expands pupils' knowledge of world views, stylistic and technical options, aesthetic systems, and the symbolic meanings that may be conveyed through art. In doing so, it broadens their understanding and appreciation of diversity in art forms, concepts, styles, and imagery; and, prompts cognitive and emotional insight, as well as artistic innovation. In short, **Multicultural Art Education** increases students' repertoire of ways of thinking and behaving, and fosters social, creative and mental growth.

Curricular and Instructional Transformation

What is needed to begin curricular and instructional reform are broad-based didactic materials that specifically examine historical and contemporary phenomena (concepts, issues and events), mass media and the arts from the perspectives of African-Americans, Native-Americans, Asian/Pacific-Americans and Hispanic/Latino-Americans, women and physically challenged people. Such materials are generally unavailable, or do not exist.

Cultural institutions (universities, museums, performing arts organizations, artists and schools), need to work with ethnic authors and publishers of instructional materials to develop programs and publish both print and non print multicultural art educational resources that can be utilized in (1) pre-service and inservice training programs for (art and non art) teachers; and (2) infused into the curriculum development and the

delivery systems of schools. Activities targeted to advancing K-12 Multicultural Art Education will improve rapport between races and the social and cultural climates in schools. They will advance interdisciplinary instruction and media literacy, as well as the artistry and cognitive processing skills of pupils. Multicultural Art Education will expand the pupils' knowledge and respect for art and the USA's ethnic diversity.

References:

This paper draws on the wisdom of Gary Howard, Executive Director, The REACH (Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage) Center for Multicultural and Global Education, 239 North McLeod, Arlington, Washington 98223; Carlos E. Cortes, Professor of History, University of California, Riverside, CA; James A. Banks, University of Washington, Seattle, WA; Carl A. Grant, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; Leon Katz, Dramaturg, Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles, CA.; Dr. David Considine, Professor of Instructional Technology & Media Studies, Appalachian College, Boone, NC.; Richard Anderson, Kansas City Art Institute.

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